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AUTHOR Sistrunk, Walter E.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Due to parental disenchantment with a Mississippi Delta junior high school principal, the principal's leadership style, the school climate, and group interactions were investigated. A consultant was employed to determine teachers', students', and parents' perceptions of the school climate and of the principal as a leader, and then to recommend a plan for modifying the principal's behavior. A total of 7 survey instruments were administered to 29 teachers, 1 survey was completed by 38 students, and 1 survey was completed by 19 parents; thus, the total sample consisted of 86 respondents. The information collected was converted to standardized scores for statistical comparison purposes. An examination of the data revealed that students were relatively satisfied with the school climate, that teachers were extremely dissatisfied with the school climate and the principal's leadership behavior, and that parents were less dissatisfied than the teachers with the climate but somewhat more satisfied than the students. Because the investigation was undertaken due to perceived parental dissatisfaction with the school climate, and because the results indicate far greater teacher dissatisfaction than parental dissatisfaction, it is believed that a small group of teachers "triggered" parent disenchantment with the school. (10 references) (KM)

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THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, THE SCHOOL CLIMATE, AND GROUP INTERACTION

By

Dr. Walter E. Sistrunk
Professor of Educational Leadership
Mississippi State University

and

Dr. Leslie Johnson
Superintendent
Yazoo City Public Schools

and

Dr. Johnny L. Kennebrew
Assistant Superintendent
Yazoo City Public Schools

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The Leadership Style of a Junior High School Principal,
the School Climate, and Group Interaction

Introduction

This study investigated the leadership style of a principal, the school climate, and group interaction in a junior high school. The person who was principal of this school had spent virtually all of his 20-25 year professional career in the same medium-sized Mississippi Delta school district. He had been principal of this school for several years. The district is a small Delta city.

Most of the students are Black. However, the junior high school is the only school in the district with an appreciable enrollment of Caucasian students. The principal is thought of as an important leader in the Black community. The district has a fairly large population of Caucasian engineers, chemists and technicians who send most of their children to the segregated private schools of the area; but, many have kept their children in the public junior high school. Some of these parents had recently become vociferously disenchanted with the junior high school principal as a school leader. The superintendent did not want to lose the support of this group of parents or the industries they represent. The question arose of how to deal with this potentially explosive situation. It was decided in the Spring of 1989, after much debate among central office staff, that a consultant should be employed to find out teachers', students', and parents' perceptions of the school climate and of the principal as a leader; then to recommend a plan for modifying the principal's behavior. This study resulted from these efforts. Some central office personnel felt that the principal should simply be reassigned or fired. Of course, the superintendent was too wise for such an action. Also, as an aside, one

assistant superintendent has left the system to accept a superintendency and another assistant superintendent has been made associate superintendent. The principal has been given a sideways circumlocution, i.e., he is in the central office with a long title, good salary, and few responsibilities. Furthermore, the district delayed completion of the study before all the data were collected. All the data have now been collected and analyzed.

The Problem

The problem was to determine the relationships among school climate, leadership style, and group interaction as perceived by teachers, selected parents, and selected students.

The Population

The population consisted of one junior high school. The instruments were administered to all faculty (35), 30 randomly selected parents, and 40 randomly selected students. Thirty-eight students, 19 parents, and 29 teachers completed all instruments. Thus, the total sample consisted of 86 respondents.

Procedures

Faculty respondents were administered the Leader Behavior II, (LBA-II) Other developed and normed by Blanchard Training and Development, Inc. Faculty were also asked to respond to the School Climate Survey, Teacher Satisfaction Survey, Form A, developed and normed by the NASSP. Faculty also responded to the NASSP School Climate Survey. Faculty were asked to complete the Group Interaction Scale developed by Moody at Mississippi State

University. Students completed the Student Satisfaction Survey of the SCS developed by the NASSP. Parents completed the Parent Satisfaction Survey of the SCS developed by the NASSP. Teachers also responded to two instruments on involvement in Curriculum Development developed by Sistrunk at Mississippi State University.

It was necessary to convert the data to standard scores for purposes of statistical comparison. Analysis of variance was then used to compare the data. A Newman-Keuls post hoc test was performed to find which pairs of groups differed and to adjust for sample size differences. Pearson Product Moment correlations were computed to determine the correlations between the LBAII and the satisfaction scales and between the satisfaction scales and LBAII and the Group Interaction Scale.

The Findings

Examination of the data in Table 1 revealed significant differences among the groups of respondents' perceptions of satisfaction with the school climate. Students were more satisfied with the school climate than parents, and both students and parents were much more satisfied with it than were teachers. This is curious since the study was undertaken because of perceived parent dissatisfaction with the school climate. It is believed that a small group of teachers 'triggered' parent dissatisfaction with the school.

TABLES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE

The data shown in Tables 3 and 4 compare the subscale scores of the Satisfaction instrument. Examination of these data also revealed significant differences on all subscales except Subscale seven. Results of the Newman-Keuls procedure revealed that parents were more satisfied than teachers on Subscales 1 and 2. Students were more satisfied than parents or teachers on Subscales 5, 6, and 8. Teachers were less satisfied with the school climate than either students or parents on all subscales, although the results of Subscales 3, 4, and 7 were not shown to be significant by the Newman-Keuls test.

TABLES 3 AND 4 ABOUT HERE

Tables 5, 6, and 7 contain the data analyzed by use of the Pearson Product Moment Correlations. Table 5 deals with the correlations between teacher satisfaction with the school climate and teachers' perceptions of the principals' leader behavior as revealed by their responses to the LBAII. There was a significant positive correlation between Subscale 3 of the Satisfaction instrument and Leader Style 2 of the LBAII. Negative significant correlations were found between Subscale 6 of Satisfaction and Leader Style 4; also between Subscale 8 and T2.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Table 6 contains the correlational data between the Group Interaction Scale and the LBAII. Only Subscale 1 of the GIS and T2 were significantly correlated. This correlation was negative.

TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

The data in Table 7 show the correlations between the Teacher Satisfaction Scale and the Group Interaction Scale. Subscale 5 of the Satisfaction scale was significantly negatively correlated with Subscales 2, 7, 9, and 10 of the GIS. Subscale 7 of Satisfaction was negatively correlated with Subscale 1 of the GIS. Subscale 8 was positively correlated with Subscale 8 of the GIS. Subscale 9 of the Satisfaction was positively correlated with Subscale 6, 8, 9, and 10 of the GIS.

TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE

Conclusions

Examination of the data revealed that students were relatively satisfied with the climate of the school. Teachers were very dissatisfied with the school climate and with the principals' leader behavior. Parents appeared to be less dissatisfied than teachers but somewhat more satisfied than students.

Parent dissatisfaction provoked the study. However, the data revealed teacher dissatisfaction to be far greater. This school building is organized so that a 'line of sight administrator' will have problems in

exercising leadership. A successful principal in a "hollow square" arrangement must get out of the office and mingle with people. The principal has been moved to the central office; but, it is doubtful if such a change will appreciably change the overall climate or thrust of the school. The new principal will need help in learning how to work successfully in such an environment. Furthermore, it has been the experience of the senior writer that once a faculty is successful in getting a principal removed there is no end to its ability or desire to get others moved. Changes will have to be made in the schedule and the faculty to solve the problem as well as the changes already made in the curriculum and in the leadership team.

Table 1

Students', Parents', and Teachers' Perceptions of Satisfaction with the Total School Climate

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	F
Students	38	402.30	72.15	
Parents	19	368.10	52.68	
Teachers	29	306.58	46.59	
Total	86	362.46	73.15	20.72*

DF = 86 *Significant at 4.04

Table 2

Results of Newman-Keuls Post Hoc Test To Determine Which Groups Differed

Students > Teachers
Parents > Teachers
Students and Parents > Teachers

Table 3

Students', Parents', and Teachers' Levels of Satisfaction with the School Climate - Sub Scale Scores

Sub-Scales	Students			Parents			Teachers			
	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	F
1	38	51.56	11.30	19	48.31	9.92	29	29.66	12.76	31.76*
2	38	69.90	14.57	19	47.11	10.14	29	50.43	18.73	19.74*
3	38	50.22	11.21	19	46.35	9.51	29	55.68	15.86	3.32*
4	38	46.03	12.29	19	48.40	8.07	29	43.21	16.13	.95*
5	38	46.01	11.96	19	39.24	7.63	29	31.78	17.13	9.50*
6	38	41.95	12.21	19	31.97	6.10	29	23.91	20.94	12.18*
7	38	48.02	13.27	19	40.76	14.10	29	39.51	16.34	3.27
8	38	48.60	13.09	19	65.96	6.78	29	29.73	13.62	52.07*

Table 4

Results of the Newman-Keuls
Post Hoc Test for the Subscales

Subscale 1	Parents > Students	
Subscale 2	Parents > Teachers	
Subscale 5	Students > Parents or Teachers	
Subscale 6	Students > Parents or Teachers	
Subscale 8	Students > Parents	Parents > Teachers

Table 5

Relationship of Teacher Satisfaction with the
School Climate to Perceptions of Leadership Styles

Teacher Satisfaction		LBAII Subscales S1	S2	S3	S4	T1	T2	T3	Teacher Effectiveness
Subscale	1	-.14	-.05	.14	.15	-.18	.12	-.16	.11
	2	.07	.13	-.16	-.07	-.02	.30	-.08	-.15
	3	-.13	.38*	-.21	-.02	-.18	.19	.17	-.23
	4	.13	-.02	.19	.03	.09	.17	-.10	-.21
	5	.05	-.12	.08	-.17	.12	-.26	-.01	.15
	6	-.11	.03	-.06	-.31*	-.25	.06	.17	.05
	7	-.05	-.19	-.02	.06	-.02	-.29	.10	.36
	8	.09	.03	.09	.01	.21	-.36*	.07	.16
	9	.20	.11	-.08	.01	.10	.05	.02	-.09

Table 6

The Relationships Between Responses to the
Group Interaction Scale and Teachers' Perceptions
of the Leadership Style of the Principal

GIS Scales	LBAII Subscales S1	S2	S3	S4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T. EFF.
1	-.21	-.12	-.19	-.00	-.31*	.25	.03		-.22
2	-.05	-.19	.10	-.03	-.24	.31	.11		-.21
3	-.10	-.29	-.09	-.04	-.24	.01	.16		-.01
4	.03	-.25	-.17	.10	-.13	.07	.21		-.21
5	.02	-.27	-.21	-.00	-.09	.11	.24		-.35
6	-.03	-.26	.20	-.05	-.16	.13	.04		-.14
7	-.10	-.19	.05	.06	-.21	.20	.18		-.25
8	-.19	-.11	.17	-.00	-.23	-.04	.05		.02
9	.08	-.02	.03	.05	-.08	.20	.12		-.21
10	.12	-.10	.05	.04	-.03	.15	.11		-.23

Table 7

The Relationships Between Responses to the
Group Interaction Scale and Teacher Satisfaction
with the School Climate

Teacher Satisfaction	GIS Subscales 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	-.04	.16	-.17	-.15	-.25	.29	.13	.25	.29	.24
2	-.14	.07	.12	-.16	-.05	-.10	.01	-.11	.06	.01
3	-.23	.02	-.12	-.16	-.05	-.10	.01	-.11	.06	.01
4	-.21	-.01	-.22	.02	-.03	.25	.23	.15	.03	.14
5	.15	-.35*	-.11	-.23	-.26	-.18	-.34*	-.17	-.42*	-.38*
6	-.00	.11	.10	.16	-.03	.13	.12	.10	.23	.18
7	-.30*	-.15	.02	-.05	-.27	-.11	-.13	-.04	-.03	-.10
8	-.03	-.03	-.10	-.24	-.20	.14	.11	.33*	.16	.19
9	-.10	.21	.19	.20	.11	.32*	.19	.39*	.41*	.32*

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